

The Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge



Table of Contents

	Page
<i>A Message from President</i>	1
<i>Fostering Strong Partnerships to Recover the Piping Plover in Maine</i>	1
<i>Refuge Updates</i>	1 & 2
<i>The Path of Perseverance: A look at the New LE Officer</i>	2
<i>Friends Member Interns at the Refuge</i>	2
<i>Timber Point Insert</i>	
<i>Restoring Habitat for Species</i>	3
<i>Classifieds</i>	4
<i>Registration Form!</i>	4

Refuge Updates

- The Houston Manner Is built, open, and currently housing refuge staff. Funds to build the new dorm style facility came from the federal stimulus fund.
- Wildlife Viewing Backpacks are now available at refuge headquarters in Wells. These backpacks can be borrowed free of charge during office hours. The backpacks contain binoculars, bird guides and everything else you may need to have a great wildlife observation experience.

A Message from the President

Each summer, we are brought out of our winter slumbers by the awakening of the exquisite landscape that surrounds us. We are called outside by the thrill of new discovery, and each day becomes a new page in the unending tale of Nature's beauty. We see the vibrant colors of our cherished coastal landscape become an ever-changing masterpiece. We feel the change of the season as we watch the flowers dancing with the birds, and the sun playing hide and seek with the trees. We close our eyes and listen to the wind whispering through the world around us, and are ever thankful for the treasures we have to discover each day.

We are called now to join together, and protect what we have cherished for so long. To take another look at what Nature has given us, and see it as though we are looking at it for

the first time. Together with The Trust for Public Land, The Kennebunkport Conservation Trust, and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge are working to protect and conserve Maine's Coast through acquisition of the 98 treasured acres that make up Timber Point. To date, our undying efforts have produced over 70% of the purchase cost. By September 15, 2011, we hope to raise the remaining funds necessary to permanently protect Timber Point. With your help, we can guarantee that the beauty of Maine's cherished coastal landscape will continue to provide inspira-

tion for years to come.

Enclosed you will find valuable information detailing the importance of the acquisition and protection of Timber Point, not only for conservation principles, but for human enjoyment as well. We support this once in a lifetime opportunity, and we know that you will to. Through your actions today, you are protecting our future.

Bill Durkin
Biddeford Pool Division
207.283.0925



Fostering Strong Partnerships to Recover the Piping Plover in Maine

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge continues to work with our partners to restore piping plovers in Maine. The State's plover population peaked in 2002 at 66 pairs. Unfortunately, several years in a row of poor productivity caused the plover population to crash and it bottomed out at a low of 24 pairs in 2008. Due to new partnerships, and increased management and outreach, Maine's plover population has begun a slow, but steady, increase. So far this year, we've risen to 33 pairs, and productivity was good at 1.9 fledged birds per a pair, the highest in ten years.

With that productivity we should continue to see modest increases in the plover populations.

Most years the Refuge manages about 30% of the nesting plovers in the State of Maine, however several of the beaches we are responsible for have lost significant amounts of sandy nesting habitat. In 2011, we managed 21% of Maine plovers, but fledged 22, or 34% of the chicks in the state. Some of the beaches we work on include the most productive plover beaches in the State, as well as one site

which is home to over 100 pairs of nesting least terns. We would like to thank all our partners, landowners, and beachgoers who contributed to the very successful plover season. As the birds head south, we bid them bon voyage and look forward to their return next March.

- Kate O'Brien
Wildlife Biologist



The Path of Perseverance: A Look at the New LE

Refuge Updates

- The Cutts Island trail has been spruced up by Maine Conservation Corps Trail Crew and has a new Kiosk. The entrance of the trail has also been updated to be made more accessible.
- Over 100 volunteers from Tom's of Maine fought heat, bugs, and thorns in order to remove invasive plants from vital NEC habitat in the Brave Boat Harbor Division.
- Volunteers of all ages served 1,118.5 hours. Thank you to all those who have helped the refuge.
- The Carson trail platforms have been updated with ARRA funding.
- Every third Friday of the month, we'll be hosting a volunteer day. Activities run from 9am-Noon, and vary from winter NEC tracking to invasive plant removal. Have fun, meet people, protect wildlife! For more info, call or email Leo Maheu at 207.646.9226ex33, or leo_maheu@fws.gov.

For more refuge information visit headquarters (312 Port Rd., Wells, ME) our website (<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/rachelcarson/>) or call 207.646.9226.

Rachel Carson NWR (RCNWR) has nearly 1,000 neighbors. With so many citizens next door, enforcing trespass and encroachment laws can be a challenge. To the great satisfaction of the refuge and its friends, Mark Kerr started working his dream job as Rachel Carson NWR's Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) in February 2010 and has had a great first year.

Mark attended Portsmouth High School and Plymouth State University where he obtained a Bachelors degree in history. While he was in New England, he visited Rachel Carson NWR and it sparked a dream, to work at the refuge in beautiful southern Maine. After college Mark joined the Student Conservation Association.

During his career, Mark has

worked for National Park Service, National Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mark spent ten years in Washington, D.C. working for the Park Service as a Park Ranger. By 1996 Mark obtained prescribed fire certification and his law enforcement commission.

To Mark, Washington, D.C. did not feel like home. In a leap of faith to return to New England, he quit his job and moved back to York, Maine. In 2000, a seasonal position opened up at RCNWR as a Forestry Technician in the prescribe fire program. Marks's dream of working full time at RCNWR was partially realized.

In an effort to become a permanent USFWS employee, Mark applied for and was hired in 2006 at Parker River NWR as their full time LEO. During



his four years there he gained a great deal of experience. Mark was hired in February of 2010, finally achieving his career goal; having "a job that he loves in a place that he loves".

Nowadays, Mark spends much of his time patrolling refuge property, both enforcing laws and educating visitors and neighbors.

The refuge is thrilled to have Mark as part of their permanent staff and is looking forward to an exciting future of resource protection and management.

~ Wendy Paterson
Wells Division

Friends Member Interns at the Refuge

This summer, the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge was fortunate enough to host Cape Elizabeth High Senior, and Spurwink River Division Friends Member, Brendan Stewart as an intern for his Senior Transition Project.

The program is designed to allow students the opportunity for further growth outside of the traditional school setting by gaining experience in a field of interest to the students. In addition, the program provides the students a means to give back to the communities that have supported them.

Brendan, whose interests lie in

Environmental Engineering and Resource Management, spent nearly 80 hours volunteering with the Refuge on projects ranging from vernal pool monitoring, managing invasive species, setting up Piping Plover exclosures, and petitioning the Senate on behalf of the Refuge System.

In order to achieve these projects, Brendan worked closely with MCC AmeriCorps Member Leo Maheu, and Friends President Bill Durkin.

Through his time interning Brendan learned that, "the area that the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge protects provides critical natural services to humans and to

wildlife, (and) after working with the Refuge, I have realized the importance of the conservation work that the Refuge does."

The staff of the Rachel Carson NWR would like to thank Brendan for his hard work during his time spent at the Refuge, and wish him the best of luck with his future endeavors.



Restoring Thicket Habitat for Species in Decline

It is a beautiful spring morning. A young New England cottontail shakes off the morning dew and begins nibbling on the fresh grasses and forbs newly sprouted from the barren ground. She has managed to survive the frigid winter in a shrubby patch of common juniper, choke cherry, Virginia rose, and tangles of greenbrier. This dense shrub or “thicket” is essential to her survival. She never travels far from the comforting cover of the plants’ thorns and arching branches. Without their protection, she would certainly be eaten by a hawk, owl, coyote, or mink. Yet for the time being, she is safely hidden beneath their boughs.

Later in the season she will be joined by others. Birds of all different colors and sizes will flutter about in search of grubs and berries to feed their young. They will build their nests in the crooks and crevices of the thicket, singing harmoniously while they find feathers and moss to line their tiny homes. Many of these birds cannot build their nests elsewhere. The thicket provides the perfect camouflage for their nest designs. Some build on the ground requiring lots of cover for protection. Others nest in the shrub and use the leaves and many small branches as a disguise. The thicket gives them what they

need to live and raise their young until they head south again for the winter.

These species and many more are dependent on shrub habitat for survival. Yet, their habitat as a whole is disappearing along Maine’s coast, particularly the southern coast – which is the most rapidly developing area in the state. Thicket habitat is created by disturbances, both natural and human-made. However, many of these disturbances can also destroy human property, and therefore, are suppressed. Fire, flood, and beaver activity are examples of these natural disturbances. On the other hand, human-made disturbance such as timber harvests can also create much needed thicket habitat. Removing mature trees to allow shrubs and young trees to grow is extremely beneficial to thicket-dependent species.

As existing thickets are fragmented and developed, Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge and partners are working hard to restore large

patches of thicket habitat to the landscape. We are using two methods to generate new habitat. The first method is to allow old agricultural fields to grow into thicket habitat, at times with the accompaniment of native shrub plantings or seeding. One of these sites, Libby Field, is in Scarborough by the Spurwink River. The second method is achieved through forestry management practices; in the winter of 2010, we created two forest openings, one in Kittery (9.6 acres) and the other in Scarborough (16 acres). These areas are slowly growing into shrublands and young forests. Restoration of thicket habitat takes time, support from the public, and an increased awareness of the necessity. Thicket-dependent species need our help. Time is of the essence. If we are going to protect this guild of species, we must act now.

- Kristina Vagos
Biological Science Technician



New England Cottontail



Thicket



Volunteers restoring thicket habitat.

Classifieds

Help Wanted!

The Friends of Rachel Carson N.W.R. are requesting representatives from each division of the Refuge to serve on the Friends Board. The Divisions include:

- Brave Boat Harbor
- York River
- Moody
- Lower Wells
- Upper Wells
- Mousam River
- Goose Rocks
- Little River

- Biddeford Pool
- Goosefair Brook
- Spurwink River

Board members serve as the eyes and ears of the Refuge in the community, and represent each divisions unique interests and concerns.

The Friends Board meets Bi-annually. For more information on the Division boundaries visit,

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Rachel%20Carson/ccphome.html>

If your interested in becoming a representative, or for more information, please call or email the Friends President Bill Durkin at,

207.283.8925 or
hts@gwi.net



The Friends of Rachel Carson NWR

P.O. Box 427

Ocean Park, ME 04063



"Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life."
~ Rachel Carson

Thank you for becoming a member!

Name(s) _____

Current Address: Street _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Please Check those that apply:

- ☐ Please renew my membership (no membership fee required)
- ☐ I am interested in making a donation (always welcomed)
- ☐ Please send me the newsletter via email to reduce cost to friends and environment
- Your name and address will not be shared with any other organization

Personal:

Student (\$5) _____
Individual (\$10) _____
Family (\$25) _____

Contributing (\$50) _____
Patron (\$100) _____
Other _____

Corporate:

Supporting (\$100) _____
Sustaining (\$500) _____
Other _____



Please return to: Friends of Rachel Carson N.W.R., P.O. Box 427, Ocean Park, Maine 04063

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